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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FUNDING FORUM

CEME, Rainham
6 December 2012 (8.30-10.30am)

Present:

Head Teachers (12): Nigel Emes (Chair) (Primary)
Margy Bushell (Primary)
Julia Deery (Primary)
Christine Drew (Primary)
Chris Hobson (Primary)
Angela Winch (Primary)
Emma Field (Primary Academy)
Julian Dutnall (Secondary Academy)
Keith Williams (Secondary Academy)

Governors (7): Joe Webster (Vice Chair) (Secondary)
Sheila Clarke (Primary)
John Parker (Primary)
Richard Shaw (Primary)
Tracey Walker (Primary)
Daniel Gricks (Secondary Academy)
Sandra Wigham (Pupil Referral Units)

**Non-School
Representatives (4):** Trevor Sim (Vulnerable Children)
Maria Thompson (14-19 Partnership)

Trade Unions (3): Keith Passingham (NASUWT)
Dave Thomas (UNISON)
Ray Waxler (NUT)

Apologies were received for the absence of Ian Trafford, Alan Perry and John McKernan

All decisions were taken with no votes against except where specified.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

13 MEMBERSHIP

The Forum acknowledged and welcomed the new members of the Forum, Sandra Wigham, as representative of pupil referral units and Emma Field as representative of primary academies.

14 **TO AGREE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2012**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Forum held on 18 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the removal of the final sentence under Item 9 regarding the 10 day training programme required for Union representatives.

Members debated the removal with many querying where the indicated requirement came from. Union representatives stated that it was underpinned by statute. However, this was contested and upon being put to the vote the Forum agreed to remove the sentence by 11 votes to 3.

15 **MATTERS ARISING**

School Meals

Further to the Forum's previous meeting, at which the Forum had supported the option of a joint contract between primary schools for the provision of school meals, to enable the continuation of the current catering arrangements, members noted that the views of schools had been sought on the repayment of grant and the method of charging for free meals.

After two letters had been sent out, 35% of schools had responded with 24 schools opting for the central service and only 3 declining. The Forum agreed that the best option would be to go ahead with a joint contract and to undergo individual negotiations with those schools wishing to opt out. With regards to billing, schools had been given the option of being charged for the number of meals used or a fixed, agreed yearly budget. The fixed budget was the overwhelming choice.

A member asked what happened to alternative provision, such as PRUs. Officers explained that in the absence of catering facilities for school meals provision, the only option for PRUs would be a packed lunch, with PRUs needing to decide whether or not to opt in or out of the same central budget, as the money had also been delegated to them.

16 **SCHOOLS FORUM RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Forum received and considered new DfE guidance outlining the new responsibilities of the Forum and an operational and good practice guide.

Key changes were identified as follows:

- no longer a maximum or minimum membership;
- TOR for the Forum to be decided by the LA;
- the voting and rights of academy/free school/UTC members needed to be considered in greater detail;

- requirement to appoint 14-19 partnership and early years PVI members but non-school members can only be a third of the total membership;
- restrictions on the DCS or deputy, cabinet member and any other officers involved in school funding for the LA.

It was stated that the areas that needed to be worked on in Havering were around training and induction of new members and the use of named substitutes. Members generally agreed that it was preferable that head teachers should still be the key members attending on behalf of schools, along with governors, as business managers would not be able to provide the overview and breadth required for the Forum to fulfil its responsibilities.

17 **REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION AND TARGETED INCLUSION**

The Forum noted that the LA had commissioned a review of its strategy for alternative education provision and targeted inclusion support services, including revised arrangements for the operation for pupil referral units.

The Forum received a presentation from a consultant regarding the review and progress made to date. The Forum noted that the review was taking place owing to Havering's specific needs as well as the change in policy at a national level, which brought about a changing landscape for the public sector.

The priority areas were:

- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)/Alternative Provision (AP)
- Prevention of educational and social exclusion
- Integrated support to schools with a focus on inclusion, behaviour and attendance
- Inter-agency working and the continuum of provision

The findings of the review had revealed that there were very low levels of permanent exclusions in primary and special schools, with the Havering School Improvement Service (HSIS) being highly valued by local schools. Further findings demonstrated that the Behaviour Support Service provided valuable support to local schools and the overall support given to special schools provided good value for money. Overall, the service provided by primary and secondary schools, PRUs and AP was described as giving good or better support to children and young people.

However, there were a number of areas for development. Such areas included the inconsistent implementation of LA arrangements for tracking and monitoring the number of pupils with reduced school timetables. There was also limited joint planning between LA support services such as Education Welfare and Behaviour Support, no risk assessment framework to support the placement considerations for some pupils into school/AP settings, absence of a targeted and coordinated approach to working with

high needs families by partner agencies and an increasing number of secondary school pupil permanent exclusions. Bullying was said to be poorly recorded and managed, online learning was under-utilised and there was no single comprehensive recording of children educated in AP.

Proposals for change were as follows:

- The duties of the ANPP to come under the restructured Fair Access Protocol (FAP);
- the merger of the four PRUs under one executive head teacher'
- the merger of the four PRS management committees under a single committee;
- a timeline with milestones to be developed with local school consortia and LA lead professionals for the work of AP and PRUs that would set out the process to be undertaken for transferring the responsibility for management of local EOTAS provision to school consortia management by 2018.

The next steps would be a stakeholder event to gain the views of all interested parties, followed by a working group and a feedback session.

The Forum noted the update.

18 **DE-DELEGATION**

Behaviour Support Service & EAL Service

At the Forum's previous meeting it had agreed on behalf of maintained primary schools to de-delegate budgets for the Behaviour Support Service and EAL service. The decision on these two services on behalf of maintained secondary schools was deferred. A decision was required in time for the budget setting timetable.

Members noted that only one representative was at the Forum on behalf of maintained secondary schools. It was proposed and agreed that a decision should be taken outside of the meeting, as it was purely a decision to be taken by maintained secondary schools, with 12 of the 18 secondary schools in Havering to be academies in 2013. The number of schools to which de-delegation applied was very small so the Forum agreed that the decision should be taken by maintained secondary representatives alongside the Chairman outside of the meeting.

Because of the decisions of the Forum to de-delegate funding for the EAL Service and Behaviour Support Service for the primary sector, both of these would be maintained and would be accessible by all schools but at a charge for academies and secondary schools if not de delegated.. It was suggested that the schools be written to letting them know about the availability of the service. Further, a letter to academies should invite them to consider how they wished to interact with the service.

Trade Union Facility Time

At previous meetings of the Schools Funding Forum the issue of Trade Union Facility Time had been considered but a decision had been deferred on behalf of primary and secondary schools pending a view from academies.

Secondary head teachers had now considered the matter and the vast majority had decided that they did not wish to return the money delegated to them to maintain the current arrangements. A decision on de-delegation on behalf of maintained primary and secondary schools was now required.

Members noted that the £200,000 top slice from the Dedicated Schools Grant paid for three or four trade union representatives for facility time. From that money schools were reimbursed for the loss of staff time when those representatives needed to be outside of the school on trade union business. De-delegation was not allowed for academies. Members queried how much of the £200,000 was reserved to cover primaries and how much for secondary schools and it was explained that it was split (roughly) in half between the two sectors.

Academy head teachers had considered that they would be able to cover the cost for facility time from within additional amounts delegated to them. The Forum was informed that there was no audit trail for the £200,000. There was no means of evidencing the work that was conducted by trade unions representatives during their facility time, however, trade union representatives explained that much of the work they did, on a day to day basis to alleviate staffing disputes (often imperceptible) saved far more money than that allocated, and was hard to measure or quantify.

The Forum, noting that a decision taken today in relation to LA maintained schools would determine the funding allocation for facility time and it was preferable for the budget to cover primary and secondary schools rather than fund a reduced provision just for primary. However, if academies were making a decision not to de-delegate then primaries would need to meet and decide what to do. Members required further information on how the money was being spent.

It was suggested that a union representative should attend a secondary head teacher meeting so that a case could be made for retaining the pooled budget and to better understand statutory responsibilities...

It was agreed a decision was not possible today and the decision was deferred to the next meeting. Officers confirmed that if a meeting were held prior to the January meeting then it would be just in time for the budget settlement.

19 **CENTRAL RETAINED BUDGETS**

The Forum noted that the reforms to school funding allowed for the retention of some budgets with the Forum's approval. All of these budgets were listed in the report submitted.

Also, the Forum was required to approve the criteria for pre-16 growth funding.

The Forum approved both aspects of Item 8 as listed in the supporting papers.

20 **EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA**

The Forum was informed that a review of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) was proposed for the following reasons:

- The transition from the previous method funding to the EYSFF had effectively ended for both PVI settings and for maintained settings;
- the current methodology for calculating the Deprivation Supplement was based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and under the draft Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2013, funding is required to move to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).
- the amount and percentage of funding allocated to the Deprivation Supplement was comparatively small.
- the 15 Hours and Flexibility supplements had a comparatively high combined level of funding. Most settings now delivered a flexible Early Educational Entitlement (EEE) or have surveyed parents who do not require this in practice.

The proposed revisions would:

- Discontinue both the 15 Hours and Flexibility Supplements
- Reallocate the whole of the funding to the Deprivation and Quality Supplements
- Introduce the IDACI methodology for allocating the Deprivation Supplement.
- No increase was proposed to the base rates.

The Forum noted the report and agreed to consultation with PVI and maintained settings with nurseries.

21 **SCHOOL BUDGETS 2013-14 - PROGRESS TO DATE**

The Forum noted that following the last meeting, Havering's draft budget pro-forma had been submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and had been approved.

The EFA would provide final data sets in the week beginning 10th December, the DSG settlement would be announced in the week beginning the 17th December and the final factors and values would be submitted to the EFA by the 18th January 2013.

22 **NEXT MEETINGS**

The Forum noted that the next meeting was to take place on Thursday 24th January 2013 at 8.30am at CEME.

Chairman

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